GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:983
ANSWERED ON:01.03.2000
C.T.B.T. .
SUSHIL KUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have sought clarifications from the US and other principal signatories to CTBT as to how far signing of CTBT is compatible with maintenance of N-deterrent by the signatories;

(b) if so, the response of the US in this regard;

(c) the main reasons for refusal of the US Congress to ratify the CTBT;

(d) whether the US and other Big Powers have indicated their willingness to allow India and Pakistan to retain the nuclear deterrent;

(e) if so, the precise position taken by them; and

(f) the reaction of the Government thereto?

Answer

MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH)
(a) The Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) only prohibits underground explosive nuclear testing; other activities relating to development, non-explosive testing, production and safe maintenance of nuclear arsenals are not restricted. Thus the CTBT is entirely compatible with the maintenance of a nuclear deterrent by those states which have already conducted nuclear tests.
(b) The US shares the Government`s assessment indicated in (a).
(c) The two main reservations expressed by the US senators voting against the CTBT related to lack of trust in maintaining the integrity of the US nuclear weapons stockpile without further explosive testing and doubts regarding the verifiability of the treaty.
(d), (e) & (f) India`s bilateral dialogue with key interlocutors, including the United States, is based on the premise that India is a state possessing nuclear weapons and will maintain a minimum credible nuclear deterrent in accordance with its own assessment of its national security requirements. The US and other countries with whom India has been engaged in talks on this issue acknowledge India`s position.